



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/028,481	12/18/2001	William P. Apps	1042 PUS	2454

7590 07/01/2003
KONSTANTINE J. DIAMOND
4010 East 26th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90023

EXAMINER

CHEN, JOSE V

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3637

DATE MAILED: 07/01/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/028,481

Applicant(s)

APPS, WILLIAM P.

Examiner

José V. Chen

Art Unit

3637

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 April 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4. 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: The limitation that the cross-ribs in one section is taller than another does not have antecedent basis in the specification.-

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the limitations of claims 26-29, 34, 35, 37-40 reciting the height of the ribs must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 26-29, 34, 35, 37-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject

Art Unit: 3637

matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The claims call for cross ribs with different heights. However, the specification fails to define such limitation so that such would be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 17, 31, 32, 33, 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 17 is indefinite in that the expression "The pallet of claim, wherein" is confusing and unclear. Claim 36 is indefinite in that it depends from an indefinite base claim. With respect to claims 31-33, it is unclear how a channel is defined by outer edges of the first and second cross-rib members

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Art Unit: 3637

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1-5, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 25, 30 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 19-23, 25-27 of copending Application No. 9/944480. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each set of claims teach a plastic pallet including lower and upper structure, ribs, column or runner structure.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claims 6, 7, 8-14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 36 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 19-23, 25-27 of copending Application No. 9/944480 in view of Breezer et al. The claims of 9/944480 structure substantially as claimed as discussed above including ribbed structure forming channels, the only difference being a reinforcement structure is not present in channels to provide better strength. However, the patent to Breezer et al teaches the use of reinforcement members placed in channels of a plastic pallet to be old. It would have been obvious and well within the level of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify the claims of 9/944480 to include reinforcement structures as taught by Breezer et al since such structure is conventional to provide the same intended purpose of providing extra strength thereby providing structure as claimed. Note the location projection of Breezer et al.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-3, 5, 15, 16, 21, 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Konig. The patent to Konig teaches structure as claimed including upper and lower deck portions, leg members, ribbed portions(figs. 1-4, 6-9). It is noted that the procedure for forming at various steps has no patentable weight in a utility claim and again it is repeated that the patent to Konig teaches all structure as claimed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 4, 11, 18, 22, 30 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konig. The patent to Konig teaches structure substantially as claimed as discussed above. The use of different connection processes, such as one piece molding, welding, etc is well known and conventional practice in plastic processes. To use such conventional processes would have been obvious and well within the level of ordinary skill in the art depending on budget and specification criteria

Claims 6, 7, 8-14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 36, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konig in view of Breezer et al. The patent to Konig teaches structure substantially as claimed as discussed above including ribbed structure forming channels, the only difference being a reinforcement structure is not present in channels to provide better strength. However, the patent to Breezer et al teaches the use of reinforcement members placed in channels of a plastic pallet to be old. It would have been obvious and well within the level of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify the structure of Konig to include reinforcement structures as taught by Breezer et al since such structure is conventional to provide the same intended purpose of providing extra strength thereby providing structure as claimed.

Note the location projection of Breezer et al.

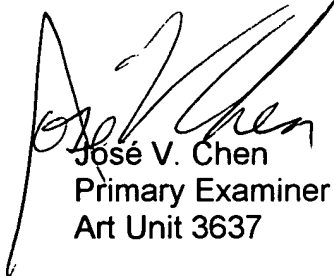
Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 04-11-03 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to José V. Chen whose telephone number is (703) 308-3229. The examiner can normally be reached on m-f,m-th 5:30am-3:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on (703)308-2168. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)872-9326 for regular communications and (703)872-9327 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-2168.


José V. Chen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3637

Chen/jvc
June 30, 2003